

Review: Surface Book 2—New Windows computer has an edgy look

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I'm a sucker for sexy hardware. I think that's why I'm drawn to Apple products. Say what you will about the Apple ecosystem being too expensive—it's darn sexy.

I've been in the IT game long enough to realize that a computer is just a tool to run software. For more than 30 years, my computers of choice have all been Apple Macintosh.

But lately, Microsoft has been introducing some pretty darn sexy hardware as well.

I've been reviewing the Microsoft Surface Book 2, which is a laptop-tablet convertible that's as sexy as any computer I've ever used.

The Surface Book 2 is Microsoft's second-generation stab at a convertible. Out of the box, it's a Windows 10 laptop with full-size keyboard and touchpad, but with the press of one button on the keyboard, the Surface Book 2's screen detaches to give you a beautiful 13.5-inch touchscreen Windows 10 tablet.

That's the sexy part—Microsoft put a battery and the computer's guts behind the screen, while the keyboard has the ports, touchpad and a second battery.

Of course, the entire package hinges on its hinge.

You can pop off the screen to use it as a tablet, or you can flip it around and dock it back on the keyboard and use it as a touchscreen easel, which I really liked. I sit in a chair with a wide and flat arm that's perfect for using the Surface Book 2 in easel mode.

The hinge is rock solid, and if you didn't know how the release mechanism worked, you'd never know the screen was detachable.

The Surface Book 2 comes in two sizes, 13.5-inch and 15-inch. The design is the same for each, with only slight differences in the hardware choices.

The 13.5-inch Surface Book 2 starts at \$1,499 with an Intel i5 CPU, 8 gigabytes of RAM and a 256 gb [solid state drive](#).

Available upgrades include an i7 CPU, Intel i5 CPU, NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1050 graphics processor and more RAM and larger SSD.

The 15-inch Surface Book 2 starts at \$2,499 with an i7 CPU, NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1060 graphics processor, 16 gigabytes of RAM and a 256 gb solid state drive. The only upgrade for the bigger model is a larger SSD—up to one terabyte—which bumps the price up to \$3,299.

The screens have a resolution of 3000 x 2000 pixels for the 13.5-inch and 3,240 x 2,160 pixels for the 15-inch model. Each PixelSense Display has a contrast ratio of 1,600:1, and the screens have 10-point multi-touch.

Each has 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.1, two USB 3.0 Type A ports, one USB-C port, an SD card reader and a 3.5mm headphone jack. Because it's a tablet, there are front and rear cameras. Neither camera will win any awards, but the front-facing camera does have Windows Hello face authentication, which worked well. Just open the laptop, and when the front-facing camera recognizes you, the screen unlocks.

The 13.5-inch model measures 12.3 x 9.14 x 0.59-0.90 inches while the 15" measures 13.50 x 9.87 x 0.59-0.90 inches. The thickness range is due to the hinge.

Microsoft says [battery life](#) is up to 17 hours. I can vouch that the battery lasts all day.

The beauty of the Surface Book 2 is in the design. The entire package is striking. I've loved Apple's laptop designs for years, but I wish Apple had the courage to release hardware as bold as the Surface Book 2. The

"tablet half" is every bit as good as any iPad I've owned. The "keyboard half" is very well built, and I found typing quite comfortable.

While I'm handing out free advice for Apple, I'd like to see it merge its desktop and tablet operating system like Microsoft has done. The transition between the full version of Windows and the touchscreen interface is seamless.

I find myself using Windows 10 computers more and more during my workday, and I'm sorry to say I'm not yet lucky enough to have a Surface Book 2 to use every day.

If I had to buy a Windows computer with my own money tomorrow, I'd likely be headed to my local Microsoft store—the Surface Book 2 is that good.

Pros: Best-designed Windows laptop I've tried. Solid hinge. Convertible. Great battery life.

Cons: Expensive.

Bottom Line: The Surface Book 2 is my new favorite Windows 10 computer.

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